

## Editorial

In this issue of *AJISS*, we present four main research articles. In a critique of modernist synthesis in Islamic thought, M. A. Choudhury sets the horizon for his inquiry with this question: Is there a possibility for the unification of knowledge in modernist epistemological comprehension? This is, of course, a pivotal question for Muslim social scientists, for whom social and epistemological theories are the main concern. What prompted this line of inquiry from a small but growing body of Muslim theorists was their realization of the conflictive and dichotomous nature of the dominant western theoretical constructs. Of equal importance is the ubiquitous and profound sense of crisis that has afflicted the human soul and life in the postindustrial age.

For more than a century, Muslim ulama, intellectuals, and reformists statesmen could discern no alternative to the adoption of western sciences and, subsequently, its concepts of social order and knowledge. What was simply seen as a benign synthesis between Islam and modernity led to the obscuring of the *tawhīdī* traditions and worldview, as well as to the hindering of the possible emergence of an alternative route for humanity's future.

Choudhury's focus on theory is met with Mawdudur Rahman's concerns about reality. In his endeavor to provide a holistic analysis of Islamic education, however, Rahman strictly avoids separation between what is theoretical, moral, and normative on the one hand, and what is practical, worldly, and positivist on the other.

Also in this issue, Ṭāhā J. al 'Alwānī concludes his study of the rights of the accused in Islam. Our hope is that he has succeeded in bringing to light the relevance of the Islamic fiqh heritage to contemporary Islamic societies, as the debate over civil and human rights has intensified significantly. In another sphere of inquiry, Shahid Vawda makes a substantial contribution to the understanding of anthropological aspects of the spread of Islam in a South African township.

There are two other important points that deserve mention here: first, concerning the future issues of *AJISS*, every winter issue will be dedicated to a specific topic on an annual basis. Abdel Wahab Elmessiri, an eminent Muslim scholar from Egypt, has kindly accepted the task of editing our first special issue for December 1995, whose theme will be secularism. In the research note of this issue, he defines the scope within which the debate on secularism is to be placed.

Finally, as we conclude *AJISS*'s eleventh year, we would like to acknowledge the distinguished efforts of all those who contributed to our four issues of 1994. A special note of appreciation and recognition goes to the *AJISS* reviewers, who carefully and anonymously analyzed many articles. Their input was indispensable for the advancement of *AJISS*, in particular, and for the Islamic social sciences, in general.

'AbdulḤamīd AbūSulaymān